

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TAIPEI 00672 060957Z

21

ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4176

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USLO PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L TAIPEI 0672

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SCUL, PFOR, UTW, US

SUBJECT: ROC PARTICIPATION IN THE US BICENTENNIAL: THE MOON
MONUMENT

REF: A) TAIPEI 6552, 1974; B) STATE 14583 (EXDIS)

1. SEVERAL RECENT LOCAL PRESS STORIES ON THE PRIVATELY SPONSORED PROJECT TO BUILD A MOON MONUMENT IN HOUSTON AS A BICENTENNIAL GIFT TO THE US (REF A) SUGGEST THAT THE PROJECT MAY BE GAINING SOME MOMENTUM BUT STILL LEAVE UNCLEAR WHETHER THE PROPOSED MONUMENT WOULD FALL WITHIN THE GUIDELINES SET FORTH FOR ROC PARTICIPATION IN THE BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS (REF B). A POINT IN QUESTION IS WHETHER THE MONUMENT IS TO BE LOCATED AT THE HOUSTON SPACE CENTER AS ORIGINALLY REPORTED IN THE PRESS.

2. ON JANUARY 5 AN EMBOFF RAISED THE MATTER IN LOW KEY WITH MOFA OFFICIAL CHU CHIEN-I (CHIEF OF SECOND SECTION, DEPARTMENT OF NORTH AMERICAN AFFAIRS) POINTING OUT THE POTENTIAL EMBARRASSMENT THAT COULD RESULT IF AFTER WIDESPREAD PUBLICITY ON THE PROJECT HERE IT WAS DETERMINED THAT THE PROJECT VIOLATED GROUND RULES AND REQUESTED MOFA ASSISTANCE IN AVOIDING THIS PROBLEM. CHU PROFESSED FAMILIARITY WITH THE GROUND RULES, APPRECIATED THE POSSIBILITY OF EMBARRASSMENT AND
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AGREED TO SEEK FURTHER INFORMATION.

3. LATER THE SAME DAY CHU CALLED EMBOFF BACK TO SAY HE HAD TALKED TO THE SPONSORING COMMITTEE AND HAD LEARNED THAT THE PROJECT WAS STILL IN THE CONCEPTUAL STAGE AND LACKED FUNDS. NO ATTEMPT HAD YET BEEN MADE TO APPROACH APPROPRIATE US AUTHORITIES NOR HAD ANY DECISION BEEN MADE ON WHYETHER THE MONUMENT WOULD BE ERECTED AT THE SPACE CENTER OR ELSEWHERE. HE AGREED TO INFORM US OF ANY FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS THAT COME TO HIS ATTENTION AND REQUESTED US TO INFORM HIM IF WE HEAR ANYTHING ABOUT THE PROJECT FROM FEDERAL OR LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN THE US.

4. COMMENT: THE MOON MONUMENT APPEARS UNLIKELY TO GET OFF GROUND FOR LACK OF FUNDS BUT WE WILL CONTINUE TO BE ALERT TO ANY FURTHER ATTEMPTS TO GIVE IT A BOOST FROM HERE. UNGER

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